



**Joseph E. Lambert**  
Chief Justice

Supreme Court of Kentucky  
Chambers, State Capitol

502-564-4162

Contact: Leigh Anne Hiatt, APR, public information officer, 502-573-2350  
cell 502-545-2839, [lhiatt@kycourts.net](mailto:lhiatt@kycourts.net)

*For Immediate Release*

## Judicial Nominating Commission announces names of nominees to fill Supreme Court vacancy created by retirement of Justice Keller

FRANKFORT, Ky., May 16, 2005 — The Judicial Nominating Commission, led by Chief Justice Joseph E. Lambert, met in the Supreme Court Conference Room at the Capitol today to choose nominees to replace Justice James E. Keller, who will retire effective May 31, 2005. Justice Keller's retirement has created a vacancy in the 5th Supreme Court District, consisting of Anderson, Bourbon, Boyle, Clark, Fayette, Franklin, Jessamine, Madison, Mercer, Scott and Woodford counties.

Three individuals were nominated to fill this vacancy: **Roger Crittenden, Mary Noble and John Roach.**

### **Roger Crittenden**

Crittenden has served as circuit judge for the 48th Judicial Circuit (Franklin County) since 1992. He first took the bench as a district judge in 1980 and was elected as circuit judge in 1991. Crittenden also has been assistant to the secretary of the Kentucky Department of Human Resources and counsel for the Kentucky Council on Higher Education. He graduated with a bachelor's degree from Georgetown College in 1967 and earned a juris doctor from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1975. He resides in Frankfort.

### **Mary Noble**

Noble has served as a circuit judge for the 22nd Judicial Circuit (Fayette County) since 1992. She practiced law for 10 years and was a domestic relations commissioner for Fayette County before assuming the bench. Noble graduated from Austin Peay State University with a bachelor's degree in English in 1971 and a master's degree in psychology in 1975. She earned a juris doctor from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1981. She resides in Lexington.

### **John Roach**

Roach currently serves as general counsel to Gov. Ernie Fletcher. After law school, he served as a law clerk to the Hon. Pierce Lively of the United States Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit, and later practiced corporate, commercial litigation and employment law in both Washington, D.C., and Lexington, Ky. Roach graduated magna cum laude from Washington and Lee University in 1989 and earned a juris doctor with high distinction from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1992.

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**Judicial Nominating Process**

When a judicial vacancy occurs, the executive secretary of the Judicial Nominating Commission publishes a notice of vacancy in the judicial circuit or the judicial district affected. Attorneys can recommend someone or nominate themselves. In accord with the Rules of the Supreme Court, the names of the applicants are not released. Once nominations occur, the individuals interested in the position return a questionnaire to the Office of Chief Justice. Chief Justice Lambert then meets with the Judicial Nominating Commission to choose three nominees. Because the Kentucky Constitution requires that three names be submitted to the governor, in some cases the commission submits an attorney's name even though the attorney did not apply. A letter naming the three nominees in alphabetical order is sent to Gov. Ernie Fletcher for review. When the governor appoints a replacement, his office makes the announcement.

**Supreme Court**

The Supreme Court is the state court of last resort and the final interpreter of Kentucky law. The Supreme Court may order a ruling or opinion “to be published,” meaning that the ruling becomes the case law governing all similar cases in the future in Kentucky.

Seven justices sit on the Supreme Court and all seven justices rule on appeals before the court. The justices are elected from seven appellate districts and serve eight-year terms. A chief justice, chosen for a four-year term by fellow justices, is the administrative head of the state’s court system and is responsible for its operation. In addition, the Supreme Court establishes rules of practice and procedure for all Kentucky judges and attorneys.

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